

Erie County Ethics Board

January Meeting Minutes

January 8, 2018 8 a.m. 16th Floor Rath Building

MEMBERS:

___ Steven Schwartz, Chair
___ Chris Trapp, Vice-Chair
___ Rebecca Town, Secretary
___ Warren Galloway
___ Miles Gresham,
___ Leslie Ortiz-Fogg, Ex-Officio

STAFF:

___ Vianne Uthman, Administrative Staff

OTHERS PRESENT:

___ Ross Kostecky, Legislature Office (recording)
___ April Baskins, Legislature Majority Leader

1. Meeting called to order at 8:18 a.m.
2. October 2017 meeting minutes reviewed and approved by Trapp, seconded by Galloway.
3. Election of Officers for 2018: Steven Schwartz was unanimously elected to continue as Chair; Chris Trapp unanimously elected to continue as Vice-Chair; and Rebecca Town unanimously elected to continue as Secretary
4. Website Updates / Email Updates (Uthman /Town /Schwartz):
 - i. Request for opinions/actions:
 - i. 10/26/17 received request from town employee Barry regarding offer of position with Town of Wales Assessment Review Board. Request was reviewed by Trapp who determined it does not present a conflict.
 - ii. 11/2/17-Ghani-awaiting detailed written request. Schwartz called to determine what the nature of the issue was and requested details be put in writing.
 - iii. 11/20/17- Dickson regarding possible conflicts of interest on West Seneca Town Board referred to the Town Board Attorney and the West Seneca Code of Ethics.
 - iv. 11/28/17-Kowal question about conducting research in Erie County, Schwartz referred to where to look for research IRBs, but request is outside our purview
 - ii. FOIL Requests: No new requests.
 - iii. Other communications: No new communications.
5. Old Business:
 - i. Board Membership: Gresham term expired 12/31/17 and has been renewed until 12/31/22.
 - ii. Galloway and Town terms end in 2018 however this may have been recorded wrong because there is usually a one year gap between appointments. Ortiz-Fogg will look into any potential recording mistakes.
 - iii. Because of concerns raised over security procedures, Uthman was able to receive approval for 5 locked file boxes. Uthman and Personnel Commissioner Dave Palmer will each have key access. The Board will consider options for digitizing and storing documents electronically and asked Ortiz-Fogg to look into this.
 - iv. Update: In the matter of Morton vs. County of Erie, et al. there are no new updates.

- v. Follow-up on 2016 Financial Disclosure Form that omitted the value of gifts received: The individuals provided documentation that they gave the equivalent amount of the gift to a charity. The cases have been closed.

5. New Business (Schwartz):

- i. 11/7/17- Legislature Majority Leader Baskin attended and spoke to the board about how she could avoid conflicts between her private not-for-profit company TSCE and her position as County Legislator in 2018. TSCE does have a contract with ECC and is interested in developing relationship with CAO and the youth detention center at E. Ferry, both of which receive county funding. The Board recommended that the organization should not receive money from any entity related to the county. Legislator Baskins should recuse herself wherever she has a personal financial relationship with anything coming before the county. She must also report any conflicts to the Clerk of the Legislature. She was advised that it is best to avoid even the perception of a conflict.
- ii. Schwartz will prepare the 2017 annual report for the March meeting.
- iii. County exec has previously proposed moving schedule for Financial Disclosures up one month. Given our current timeline, and lack of new legislation, this is not feasible and we will stay with the original schedule for now.
- iv. Trapp will review our Rules and Regulations. Members should review on the website and send recommendations to Trapp.
- v. All members need to review the 2016 Financial Disclosure forms and recommend any changes for next year. Comments will be sent to Gresham to prepare for the March meeting.
- vi. Next year's calendar approved and will be posted to the website.

6. Next meeting scheduled for Monday February 5, 2018 at 8 a.m. Trapp will Chair the meeting.

7. Motion to adjourn at 8:48 am made by Gresham seconded by Trapp.